



**The newspaper
of record for
San Diego's Asian Pacific
Islander community**

Filipino veterans are finally served

Thousands of Filipino veterans who fought during World War II are eagerly awaiting President George Bush to sign a bill according them health care and disability benefits they so richly deserved. For years the issue has been dragged out in Congress. Finally, it looks as if they will be granted what many earned with their blood.

The bill, if passed, will grant health benefits such as access to Veterans Administration facilities and nursing homes, full disability benefits for war-related injuries and burial rights in national cemeteries.

No one has pushed harder for this passage than U.S. Reps. Susan Davis and Bob Filner, both Democrats, along with actors Rob Schneider, Lou Diamond Phillips and Keanu Reeves, all of Filipino descent.

We cannot thank them enough for their diligence and perseverance.

The Philippines was a territory of the United States when the war broke out with Japan in December 1941. By executive order of then President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 140,000 Filipinos in the islands were organized into military units to fight against the Japanese. As such, they were promised U.S. protection and privileges should they survive the conflict. However, when the Philippines achieved independence in 1946, those promises were forgotten because of the country's new status.

It took almost 60 years to finally get back some of what was promised. Military pensions are the next step. With most of these veterans in their late 70s and 80s, we obviously can't wait another 60 years.